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NATO CONFIDENTIAL FROM WASHINGTON
POLITICAL ANALYSIS: SOVIET DETENTE READING: ASSESSMENTS
CONFIDENT DESPITE OBSTACLES

1. RECENT ARTICLES BY SOVIET AMERICANOLOGISTS G. ARBATOV
AND G. TROFIMENKO OF THE USA INSTITUTE (IN IZVESTIYA,
SEPTEMBER 4, AND INTERNATIONAL LIFE, SEPTEMBER ISSUE)
ASSESS SOVIET-US RELATIONS IN TERMS WHICH SUGGEST BOTH:

(A)--AN ONGOING INTERNAL DEBATE ON THE WISDOM OF SOVIET
DETENTE POLICY AND

(B)--A DESIRE TO CONVINCE US DECISIONMAKERS THAT MOSCOW'S
CURRENT CRITICISM OF US POLICY, ESPECIALLY ON THE MIDDLE
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EAST, IS NOT AN ATTACK ON DETENTE PER SE.

2. THE ARTICLES, IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER RECENT STATEMENTS, SEEM TO BE SAYING THAT THE SOVIET LEADERS ARE STILL COMMITTED TO THE BELIEF THAT DETENTE IS IN THE USSR'S OWN BEST INTERESTS BUT THAT THERE ARE LIMITS BEYOND WHICH MOSCOW SHOULD NOT BE PUSHED TO SUSTAIN THIS RELATIONSHIP.

3. ARBATOV'S DEFENSE OF SOVIET PERFORMANCE: ARBATOV'S MILITANT IZVESTIYA ARTICLE PORTRAYS THE US AND USSR AT A POLITICAL FRONTIER, WHERE A "DEMARCATIION" AND A "REGROUPING OF FORCES" ARE INEVITABLE. FOCUSING ON THE OUTCOME OF CSCE, ARBATOV ARGUES THAT:

(A)--THE CSCE FINAL ACT SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A TURNING POINT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS;

(B)--THOSE IN THE WEST WHO ARE TRYING TO USE IT AS A WEAPON FOR INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES ARE AT BEST MISGUIDED, AT WORST UNRECONSTRUCTED ANTI-COMMUNISTS;

(C)--THE USSR WILL FULLY MEET ITS OBLIGATIONS PURSUANT TO THE FINAL ACT, "ON THE BASIS OF RECIPROCITY AND IN FULL CONFORMITY WITH THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF THE DOCUMENT";

(D)--THE US, WITH ITS MANY HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS, HAS NO "MORAL RIGHT" TO JUDGE OTHERS;

(E)--THE MAIN TASK IN EAST WEST RELATIONS IS TO MAKE DETENTE IRREVERSIBLE, AND THE USSR IS OPTIMISTIC THIS WILL ULTIMATELY BE ACCOMPLISHED.

4. ARBATOV'S CHARGES THAT THE WEST IS INTERPRETING THE CSCE AS AN INVITATION TO CONDUCT ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE ARE SUPPLEMENTED BY HIS IDEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT THAT THE SOVIETS ARE JUSTIFIED IN INTERPRETING THE CSCE AGREEMENTS IN THEIR OWN LIGHT. DIVIDING CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL LIFE INTO A SPHERE OF INTERSTATE RELATIONS AND A SPHERE OF "SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT," ARBATOV IMPLIES THAT DETENTE IS TO GOVERN IN THE FORMER WHILE THE RULES OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE (I.E., IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE) APPLY IN THE LATTER.

5 HE EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF DRAWING A CLEAR LINE BETWEEN THE TWO AND STATES THAT THIS DISTINCTION IS THE ONLY REALISTIC BASIS FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL SYSTEMS. FROM THIS HE IS ABLE TO DEDUCE

THAT THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IMPOSES ON THE WEST DEFINITE LIMITS "ENVISAGING THE RENUNCIATION OF SLANDER, INCITEMENT TO HATRED AND MISTRUST, IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSION," ETC AND

TO DEFEND THE JURIDICAL BASIS OF THE SOVIET UNION'S OWN PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES, HE REACHES BACK TO THE 1933 ROOSEVELT-LITVINOV AGREEMENT PLEDGING RESTRAINTS ON AGITATION AND PROPAGANDA.

(6) ARBATOV'S APPROACH, AT ONCE AGGRESSIVE AND DEFENSIVE, SUGGESTS THAT THE SOVIETS WILL NOT ONLY REBUFF ANY EFFORTS BY THE US TO EMPHASIZE SOVIET BASKET III OBLIGATIONS BUT WILL CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS A BETTER RECORD IN SOME ASPECTS OF CULTURAL POLICY THAN THE US. AND ARBATOV FLATLY STATES THAT THE SOVIET UNION INTENDS TO DEVELOP HUMANITARIAN CONTACTS "IN SOME CASES ON THE BASIS OF ITS OWN DECISIONS AND IN OTHERS...ON THE BASIS OF AGREEMENTS WHICH HAVE YET TO BE DEVISED AND SIGNED " THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE SOVIETS WILL INTERPRET SELECTIVELY AND SUBJECTIVELY PROVISIONS AFFECTING THE CLOSED NATURE OF SOVIET SOCIETY.

(7). TROFIMENKO'S POSITIVE ANALYSIS: TROFIMENKO, A SENIOR STAFF MEMBER OF ARBATOV'S INSTITUTE, CONTENTS IN HIS ARTICLE THAT A "CERTAIN STABILITY" HAS ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS WHICH EVENTS CAUSING TENSIONS CAN NO LONGER AUTOMATICALLY DISRUPT. HE CONTENTS THAT:

(A)--OBJECTIVE FACTORS, NOT TEMPORARY DIFFERENCES, USUALLY DETERMINE THE COURSE OF SOVIET-US RELATIONS, WHICH, IN A NUCLEAR EPOCH, PRECLUDE ANY ALTERNATIVE TO PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE;
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(B)--HIS THESIS IS SUPPORTED BY THE FACT THAT TWO IMPORTANT SOURCES OF TENSION IN THE RECENT PAST, THE 1973 MIDDLE EAST CRISIS AND THE 1974 TRADE ACT, DID NOT PRODUCE "RIPPLES" ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE OVERALL DETENTE RELATIONSHIP;

(C)--ALTHOUGH THE FOLLY OF THE JACKSON AMENDMENT IS NOW WIDELY RECOGNIZED, IT DID NOT CAUSE A NEGATIVE INFLUENCE IN OTHER ASPECTS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS SUCH AS FURTHER PROGRESS ON SALT AT HELSINKI (SIC).A

8. TROFIMENKO REITERATES SOVIET THESES FOLLOWING THE VLADIVOSTOK SUMMIT THAT AN "INFRASTRUCTURE" FOR RELATIONS HAS BEEN CREATED THROUGH THE SERIES OF BILATEURAL AGREE

MENTS THAT HAVE BEEN SIGNED SINCE 1972, ESPECIALLY THAT ON BASIC PRINCIPLES. HIS HARSH ATTACKS AGAINST THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, ZIONISTS, "JACKSONITES," AND SO FORTH,

ARE OFFSET BY HIS CONCLUSION THAT THESE ELEMENTS ARE OUT NUMBERED IN AMERICAN SOCIETY: THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF AMERICANS, HE DECLARES, DO NOT APPROVE OF "ZIG-ZAGS" IN RELATIONS, AND SOVIET-AMERICAN COOPERATION OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, ESPECIALLY IN THE ECONOMIC AREA, ASSURES THAT OPPOSITION TO DETENTE IN THE US WILL BE OVERCOME.

(9). DEFENSIVENESS ABOUT DETENTE; THESE ARTICLES JUXTA POSE A TONE OF BLUSTER ALONG WITH REASSURANCES ABOUT THE STATE OF HEALTH OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS. IN THIS, THEY PARALLEL THE EMPHASIS IN RECENT SOVIET COMMENTARY ON CONTENTIOUS ISSUES IN THE RELATIONSHIP AND THE SIMULTANEOUS CIRCUMSPECT TREATMENT OF RECENT STATEMENTS BY US GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WARNING OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF CERTAIN SOVIET ACTIONS CONSIDERED INIMICAL TO US INTERESTS. SOVIET MEDIA DID NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, COMMENT ON PRESIDENT FORD'S AUGUST 19 AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION REMARKS ON INCREASED SPENDING ON STRATEGIC WEAPON PROGRAMS IF REAL PROGRESS IS NOT ACHIEVED IN SALT II. THEY ALSO EXCISED OR OBSCURED RECENT WARNINGS OF THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY KISSINGER ON PORTUGAL

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10. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS ARE CLEARLY CONCERNED OVER WHAT THEY APPARENTLY REGARD AS AN EMERGENT HARDLINE TREND IN THE US, THEY HAVE BY AND LARGE IDENTIFIED THIS TREND WITH PERSONALITIES AND GROUPS HOSTILE TO THE ADMINISTRATION AND HAVE HANDLED ADMINISTRATION STATEMENTS DISCREETLY. THE ADMINISTRATION ITSELF HAS BEEN PORTRAYED AS A DEFENDER OF DETENTE, AND SOME COMMENTARIES HAVE EXPRESSLY THANKED THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS PUBLIC DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET US RAPPROCHEMENT--A GESTURE ALSO MADE BY PONOMAREV IN HIS REMARKS TO VISITING US CONGRESSMEN IN AUGUST. IN BRIEF, MOSCOW IS CONTINUING TO PRESENT AN OVERALL IMAGE OF US FOREIGN POLICY WHICH AVOIDS SUGGESTING A COOLER POSTURE BY THE FORD ADMINISTRATION ON DETENTE;

11. THE PUBLICATION OF THE ARBATOV AND THE TROFIMENKO ARTICLES AT THIS TIME ALSO SUGGESTS A DESIRE TO EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE RESULTS OBTAINED THROUGH PURSUIT OF DETENTE. THE EXTERNAL AUDIENCE IS CLEARLY US DECISIONMAKERS, WHO MAY BE THOUGHT TO NEED CONVINCING THAT MOSCOW'S CURRENT CRITICISMS OF THE US, ESPECIALLY ON THE MIDDLE EAST, DO NOT AMOUNT TO AN ATTACK ON DETENTE PER SE, HOWEVER, THE DEFENSIVE TENOR, ESPECIALLY OF THE ARBATOV ARTICLE, IS

SUGGESTIVE OF AN ONGOING INTERNAL DEBATE OVER THE WISDOM OF SOVIET DETENTE POLICY. (IT MIGHT BE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH BOTH ARTICLES APPEARED THE SAME DAY, THE MILDERTROFIMENKO PIECE WENT TO PRESS AS MUCH AS THREE WEEKS

EARLIER THAN DID ARBATOV'S--I.E., BEFORE THE MIDDLE EAST AGREEMENT MATERIALIZED;)

12; IF SUCH A DEBATE IS IN FACT TAKING PLACE, IT WOULD SEEM NOW TO FOCUS MORE ON THE COSTS THAN ON THE BENEFITS OF DETENTE TO THE SOVIET UNION. THE IMPACT OF CSCE PROVISIONS INVOLVING CONTACTS OF SOVIET CITIZENS WITH THE WEST CANNOT HELP BUT CONCERN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP. DEBATES ON THE SUBJECT, THOUGH OBVIOUSLY NOT NEW, MUST CERTAINLY BE MORE TOPICAL THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE PAST, PARTICULARLY NOW WITH THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS POSITIONS BEING FORMULATED. IN THIS CONTEXT, THESE CURRENT SOVIET ASSESSMENTS OF RELATIONS WITH THE US ARE AS MUCH A DEFENSE OF SUPPORTERS OF DETENTE WITHIN BREZHNEV'S COTERIE
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AS THEY ARE A WARNING TO THE SUPPOSED OPPONENTS OF DETENTE WITHIN THE US SISCO

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